

BROAD STREET M. E. CHURCH

*With compliments of*  
*Gen. F. Rusling*

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

OF

GEN. JAMES F. RUSLING, LL.D.

NOVEMBER 23, 1913



HISTORICAL ADDRESS  
OF  
GEN. JAMES F. RUSLING, LL. D.  
AT  
BROAD STREET METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
TRENTON, N. J.

November 23, 1913



AT ITS  
Forty-first Anniversary  
1872-1913

REV. JOHN GOORLEY, Pastor

---

TRENTON, N. J.  
MacCrellish & Quigley, Printers.

1913.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries



## Historical Address by Gen. James F. Rusling, One of its Founders.

---

DEAR FRIENDS:

It was a shrewd old philosopher and poet who wrote:

“It is greatly wise to talk with our past hours,  
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,  
And how they might have borne more pleasant news.”

And so we are assembled here to-day, after the fashion of our sister churches, to celebrate the Forty-first Anniversary of this stalwart old church, and to talk a little about *who she is* and *what she has done*.

First of all, permit me to tender you my congratulations and felicitations, and to bid you one and all, and your dear old church, a hearty hail and Godspeed. You began your church-life here in the fall of 1872, with many doubts and forebodings—few in numbers and feeble in finances—but the Great Head of the Church has smiled upon you, and to-day you stand erect in the midst of this growing community, with a membership of 425 and a Sunday-school of 500, nearly, and with a Church and Parsonage property valued at about \$25,000. How did it all happen, and how did you make such things “come to pass” here? I propose to tell, as briefly as possible. Pardon me in advance if I indulge in some personalities. But “the truth of history” compels it. First of all, you were incorporated as a Church, November 8, 1869, and pardon me for saying I had the honor of drawing and filing in the Mercer County Clerk’s Office your original Certificate of Incorporation. (See Mercer County Book of Religious Corporations, p. 47.) The meeting for same was held in the old Public School House on what was

then known as the Pond Run Road, but now called Liberty Street, in a little settlement of a few houses there on the Hamilton Land Association, then called Ruslingville, October 20, 1869 (now known as our new Franklin Public School House), and the following seven persons were duly elected as your first Trustees, to wit: Joseph T. Kinney, William S. Yard, Joseph Atwood, Alexander C. Yard, James F. Rusling, Israel Howell and Reuben Kent—now all passed away except myself and Alexander C. Yard, our present and for many years efficient U. S. Postmaster of Trenton, N. J. These seven men were selected as good representative men from the chief M. E. Churches then here, as follows: Joseph T. Kinney and Reuben Kent, Central; William S. Yard and Israel Howell, Greene Street (now 1st N. J.); Alexander C. Yard and myself, State Street; and Joseph Atwood, Trinity. We were all laymen, except Joseph Atwood, who was a regular member of the New Jersey Conference, annexed that year to Trinity, as Supernumerary or Superannuated. He was selected with the hope that his experience previously as a minister would prove useful to us laymen. William S. Yard, then an active and influential Methodist here, was elected President of the Board, and James F. Rusling, Secretary, and Rev. Joseph Atwood and myself appointed a Committee on Subscriptions. This was a pretty good Board in theory, but practically it did not amount to much—its members were too remote and too widely scattered. What the proposed Church needed was “Home Rule!”

This organization was the outcome of a little Methodist Prayer and Class Meeting that had been held in said old Public School House and nearby private houses for several years, more or less intermittently, connected with Central M. E. Church, with Zimri West, Ezekiel Pullen and others as leaders. A Church was much talked of, but none materialized. Its members were few in number and feeble in finance, but they still prayed on and hoped for a day of better things.

This came in the spring of 1869, when General Rusling invited the members of said class and all others in sympathy



therewith, residing in Chambersburg, to meet at the White Public School House, corner of Whittaker and Roebling Avenues (now known as the Washington Public School House there), on the following Sunday afternoon at 2 P. M. and organize a Methodist Sunday-school there, of which he was duly elected the first Superintendent. He obtained permission from the School Trustees to use said Schoolroom for Sunday-school purposes, and wrote and posted the notices for said meeting, so that he is a competent witness. This became known immediately as the Chambersburg Methodist Sunday-school. This first meeting thereof consisted of only about a score or so, children and all included, with half a dozen testaments and hymn books, and a few Lesson Leaves; but we had 3 or 4 men, and several "elect ladies," and proceeded to organize. This Sunday-school grew rapidly until presently we had over a hundred scholars and a full complement of officers and teachers, and were soon the pride and delight of Chambersburg. Then came the great Methodist Sunday-school Parade of 1869, of all the Methodist Sunday-schools of Trenton together, in which we all participated, with our own banner and band (good as any of them), and then we all marched to the Morrisville Grove and spent a delightful day together. This was the greatest Sunday-school demonstration ever held in Trenton, and was in part a response to our Roman Catholic friends, who some weeks before had had a like parade of all their Sunday-schools, and deluged our streets with their children, and scared some of our Protestant "old women of both sexes." But this parade of Methodist Sunday-schools alone much exceeded theirs, or any other ever held here, and was long the talk and pride of the town. I beg pardon for saying it was my high honor to serve as Chief Marshal of this great parade, mounted on my old black Morgan war-horse, that had carried me through most of the Civil War and afterwards, and it is the truth of history that he seemed to enjoy the music and marching as much as any of us!

Meanwhile our Chambersburg Methodist Sunday-school prospered, and in November, 1869, together with the aforesaid

Class and Prayer Meeting flowered out into the Broad Street M. E. Church, as already stated. New Trustees were duly elected, and they were urged to proceed with a Church, and General Rusling, on behalf of himself and brother, William Henry Rusling, offered them two valuable lots of land, whenever they were ready to go ahead, and Mr. Chambers, our adjoining property owner on the west, offered to do something also. But the Trustees lacked vision and courage, and after months of delay, concluded it was premature to build yet. Two years or so afterwards they reported they had changed their minds, and would now be glad to accept our offer. "Ah," I replied, "but it is now too late. The main lot (and most valuable)—the corner lot—was sold some time ago (and all our other lots there substantially), and I don't know whether we can get it back again, but will see." Fortunately the purchaser was a Christian gentleman, and an old army comrade of mine, and brother lawyer (Gen. Edward L. Campbell), and when the situation was explained, he kindly consented to surrender his purchase and take a lot elsewhere of equivalent value in lieu thereof, and thereupon the said 2 lots were again tendered to the Trustees and gladly accepted. These were lots numbers 39 and 40, on the Map of Lots of the Linden Park Land Association, northwest corner of Broad Street and Chestnut Avenue—not back lots, nor inferior lots, nor "cripples," as surveyors call irregular lots, but the very best lots we had on that whole Map of Lots, each 26 feet by 100 feet, and Broad Street M. E. Church now stands upon these two handsome lots to-day. The deed for the same was executed April 4, 1872, by the Linden Park Land Association, to the Church direct, by order of myself and brother, we being the chief stockholders of said Association, to save the cost of double conveyances, and we paying the Association in full for the same. The price in the deed was given as \$500 (a mere nominal sum), but they are worth to-day over \$2,000, and pardon me for saying we each subscribed liberally besides, as well as other friends.



The standard lot of this Land Association was only 25 feet by 100 feet. How, then, came these two lots to be deeded as 26 feet each, may naturally be asked. Well, "it was this way," as our school girls say: For many years there had been a friendly dispute over the westerly division line, between my father and Mr. Abner R. Chambers (property owner on the west) and his father, each claiming the fence was two or three feet over on his land, and when our Land Association was about taking title I suggested one day to Mr. Chambers that before doing so it would be wise for all concerned to have this old division line re-surveyed, and proposed if it appeared we had any of his land we would duly surrender it, and if he had any of ours he should do the same *vice versa*. Mr. Chambers said that was fair, but he complained there was no surveyor in Trenton fit to do such a job. "Well, then," I replied, "get a surveyor to suit yourself, and if the fence proves to be on you we will pay his bill, and if on us, you shall pay it, and we will exchange land accordingly. He said this was fair also, and soon afterwards engaged a Pennington surveyor, and when he had gone carefully over the old line, he reported the fence two feet over on us (I have his old map still), and thereupon Mr. Chambers conveyed to us said two extra feet of land accordingly. My brother and I held a "council of war" and decided to give the church the benefit of these "two extra feet" also, and thus each of our said lots was made 26 feet front on Broad street instead of 25 feet, as originally intended.

The additional lot on the west (not two lots, as sometimes alleged), 25 feet by 100 feet, on which the parsonage now stands, was given to the church by Mr. Abner R. Chambers, May 29th, 1872. His deed was not altogether satisfactory, but I advised the trustees, nevertheless, to accept it as tendered, and take the chances of the future.

That was 1872. Sixteen years afterwards, in 1888, when the church had got upon its feet, and wanted to enlarge and improve somewhat, and was also ready to erect a handsome brick parsonage, but found it difficult to borrow the required money, because of

said conditional deed, he kindly consented to amend it as desired, *provided* I would draw the necessary papers, which, of course, I gladly did. Mr. Chambers was not a Methodist, either, but a pious Presbyterian, and an excellent citizen, and as one of the original founders and chief benefactors of this church it is but right and fair he should be accorded due credit here accordingly.

And so, it would seem, this church is Methodist and the parsonage Presbyterian! And so, when your good dominie enters the church, let him remember he is on good Methodist ground, and can preach and pray as loud and long as he chooses, "according as the Spirit moves him." But when he enters the parsonage, let him remember he is on strong Presbyterian ground, and mind his "p's and q's" a little, lest he awaken the ghost of John Calvin, and find "Jordan a hard road to travel," before he reaches General Conference, or attains to the Episcopacy! "Whatsoever is to be, will be," and "whatsoever is not to be, won't be," are both good doctrines—in "spots." But as for me, I have always tried to persuade Providence to come my way just as much and far as possible! And so, with all my short-comings (being only "a sinner saved by grace"), I hope yet to make Heaven my home!

"For, the delightful day will come,  
When my dear Lord will bring me home,  
And I shall see His face;  
Then with my Saviour, brother, friend,  
A blest eternity I'll spend,  
Triumphant in His grace!"

I should like to say something about the long line of able and efficient pastors you have had, but time forbids. I can only speak of two or three. First, there was Rev. J. R. Westwood, a graduate of a Philadelphia grocery store, but afterwards a D. D. from Dickinson College—gifted, brilliant and efficient everywhere. Then there was Rev. Joseph E. Willey, who served for five years, with great acceptance. He was a graduate of a carpenter shop, and went to work on the church with his old overalls on, and saw and hammer in hand, as I often saw myself. He raised \$5,000 to remodel and enlarge the old church and built the new parsonage



at the same time, costing \$3,500 more. He was one of "God Almighty's picked men," as Thomas Carlyle used to say, just what Broad Street Church needed at that time. And green be his memory here forever! When the church was re-opened, the new dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. Bishop Edward G. Andrews, of New York, on the present condition and prospects of Christianity, and was one of the ablest and most statesmanlike and convincing discourses I have ever listened to. Then there was Rev. Percy Perinchief—then a recent importation from Bermuda, but now our popular and efficient District Superintendent, and D. D. also—a true West India Yankee. Would we had more such importations! He had a great revival, and increased your membership from 285 to over 400 and your "pastor's salary" from \$900 to \$1,000, which was doing well for that period. He also built the new Chambers Street Chapel (now Chambers Street Church), valued then at about \$3,000. Thanks to the handsome lot donated by the late Samuel K. Wilson, 100 feet square, northeast corner Chambers and Liberty streets, valued at \$1,500, and the noble gift of A. K. Rowan, \$500, and "the generous aid of J. F. Rusling, W. D. Mullen and other Trenton friends." Then there was Rev. Joseph F. Shaw, now a "D. D." also, an inspired young Irishman, who lost his winter overcoat one cold night by a burglary at the parsonage. He purchased a new one, but another burglar also got that. Think of the "total depravity" of these two burglars, who were mean enough to rob a poor Methodist preacher twice in the same way! Then Brother Shaw came to see me, for counsel and advice, and I told him to go uptown and buy the very best overcoat he could find, that would be suitable for a Methodist minister, and send the bill to me, which he did. Of course, I could not do anything else, for he was an Irishman and so was I—150 years ago, in the person of my great-great-grandfather, on my mother's side (a Scott-Irish McCullough from Ulster), and so I helped him out best I could. Last, but not least, there is Rev. John Goorley, a man of faith and of the Holy Ghost, who is doing a great work for you this year, making all these splendid improvements and renovations, costing over \$3,000, and



providing for it all. May heaven bless and spare him to the New Jersey Conference for long years to come!

I would also like to say something for Andrew K. Rowan, of Broad Street Park, who was also a good friend and generous benefactor of this Church, but time and failing strength forbid.

I should also like to say a good word for Eugene S. Willey, one of the fathers and founders of Broad Street Park M. E. Church—the “worthy son of an illustrious sire”—who, Brother Goorley tells me, headed his list for these present improvements here with a subscription of \$500 (the largest he has had), and thus made this splendid renovation possible. God bless and spare him to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and all the Willeys, for long years to come!

As I have said, this Church was begun in the spring of 1872 and finished the same year. It was dedicated by Rev. Bishop Edward C. Ames, of Indianapolis, one of the greatest Bishops the Methodist Church has ever had. He was a friend of Abraham Lincoln before he became President, and after he became President, he never went to Washington but he called at the White House, and before they parted they always had “a word of Prayer” together. In 1864 he was chairman of a delegation of Methodist ministers, that called on him one day from General Conference at Baltimore, and in response to their loyal greetings, uttered these memorable words: “It is no fault of others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the front, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to heaven for the Union than any other Church in our land.” And then he reverently added, in a spirit worthy of the immortal Lincoln, “God bless the Methodist Episcopal Church!” And then he quickly added, like the wary politician he was, “And bless all the Churches, and blessed be God, who in this hour of trial hath given us the Churches!”

This was then the only Church of any kind in all that great territory, from the canal east to Liberty Street and north to Greenwood Avenue, except the Hamilton Avenue M. E. Church.

and all that region was then practically heathen, ecclesiastically speaking, except as aforesaid. But to-day, thanks to your leadership, there are now 21 Churches there, including Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists and Lutherans—English Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Russians and Poles—Protestants and Roman Catholics. What a polyglot city, indeed, we have already become! But all working in their own way, for the glory of God and the welfare of our fellow-men—for human betterment and spiritual uplift, as they understand things—for making this world a better and a sweeter place in which to live and die. And in so far as they do this, and labor faithfully for these lofty and beneficent ends, according to their several lights, shall we not award them due honor and credit accordingly? Or, in the fine words of our great Quaker Poet, John G. Whittier, with a broad Christian charity, worthy of Americans, shall we not devoutly sing:

“O Lord and Master of us all,  
What'er our name or sign,  
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,  
We test our lives by thine.”

It seems to me, the older I grow, that any Church is better than no Church. And as for our old beloved Broad Street Church here—the father and forerunner of all these Chambersburg Churches, except one as I have said, O Church of our fathers and mothers, O Church of John Wesley and Francis Asbury, O Church of the ever-living God:

“Immovably founded in grace,  
May she stand as she ever has stood,  
And brightly her Builder display,  
And flame with the glory of God!”

In conclusion let me tell you a little Sunday-school story—not manufactured for the occasion, as some Sunday-school stories are said to be, but an “over true tale.” It is all “as true as preaching,” and there is nothing truer than that in all this world,



*provided* it is good sound Methodist preaching. It was in the summer of 1869 and our old Chambersburg Sunday-school was about closing one Sunday afternoon, when the door opened and in walked a Trentonian that I had known for many years. He had been an old superintendent of mine in Greene Street Sunday-school a quarter of a century before, and was the best Sunday-school superintendent I have ever known. He was also a brilliant class leader there at that time. He was also editor of a leading newspaper here, and afterwards became an able reporter on another for many years, and then he engaged in politics, and became Member of Assembly and Mayor of Trenton, I think, twice; but meanwhile he took to drinking, and became worse and worse until finally he quit the church and the Sunday-school, and all such good things, and was on the downward road to ruin. But Sunday-schools still held a fascination for him, and often he would be found addressing them still. When he came into our old Sunday-school that afternoon we were about closing, but I asked him if he would not kindly say a few words to the children, which he did; then we sang a hymn and were about kneeling down to pray, when I debated with myself whether it would be right or fair to ask him to pray. Finally, I said to myself, "it can't do us any harm, and may do him some good," and so, as we knelt down, I said to him, "Won't you kindly lead us in prayer?" He turned around upon me with a wild and startled look I shall never forget. Then, presently, he began to pray in a feeble and halting manner, and made one of the most halting and hobbling prayers I ever listened to; but as he went on his mind and matter cleared, and afterwards there came flashes of his old fire, and as he prayed on something went to my heart and I had a feeling of the conscious presence of the Holy Spirit as never before in my life. He prayed but briefly, and when he got through he arose, and bowing to me and the school, left without saying good-bye, and I said to myself, "Well, old fellow, you have made another enemy this time, sure." But it was all over and could not be helped. I did not see him Monday, but on the Tuesday following, as I walked uptown, I saw him leaning



against the fence at the Court House. He called me to him as I passed by, and said, "Do you know that was a remarkable meeting we had at your little Sunday-school on Sunday? I don't know what it was, but as I tried to pray, something got around my heart and I never felt the presence of the Holy Spirit so consciously as on that day, and I went home and thought about it and made up my mind to return to the church again. Last night I went to a temperance meeting and joined the "Sons of Temperance" and made a solemn vow that I would come back to the church and 'do my first works over again,' and next Sunday I am going to my old church—Trinity M. E. Church—and join again," which he did, and after serving out his six months as probationer he was taken into full membership, and subsequently was promoted to exhorter and local preacher, and addressed Sunday-schools or preached sermons every Sunday the balance of his life.

Now, if you ask me whether this old Sunday-school has paid for itself, I answer yes; first, because it helped this church in part to find itself, and, secondly, because it brought Franklin S. Mills back again to the church and to God, and if it never accomplished anything more than this, it paid for itself a hundred times over.

Here's "peace to his ashes" and "God rest his soul," now and evermore!

After all, it seems to me, we must believe in something. This great universe of ours, with its fields and its forests, its birds and its flowers, its pulsing seas and overarching resplendent skies, its thinking men and radiant women, its music and its mysteries, could not have come by chance. Ridiculous and unthinkable! And over all these there must be a Gracious Being, who dearly loves us as His children—intends only our ultimate and supreme good. Or, as Pope well sang, "Whatever is, is right," though sometimes things seem wrong—only a riddle and a puzzle. But the Good Book (best Book in all this world) says: "All things shall work together for good to them that love God and keep His commandments"; and if they won't, that is not His fault. And

there must be a brighter and braver life hereafter, or else all this world is "an idle show."

In these latter days of my life, I often think of Cicero's fine philosophy in his "De Senectute," or essay on old age. "O glorious day, when I shall escape from existence here on earth, and join that divine company and assembly of souls on high, and quit this troubled and polluted scene forever. For I shall go not only to those great men, of whom I have spoken before (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Homer and others), who have preceded me there, but also to my dear friend Cato, than whom never was better man born. And there we shall talk and philosophize upon the great things of time and eternity, throughout the unending ages. And if in this I am mistaken, that I believe men's souls to be immortal, willingly do I delude myself, nor do I desire that this my mistake should be wrested from me, as long as I live; but if I, when I die, shall have no consciousness, but shall become nothing and be nobody, as some small philosophers imagine, I do not fear lest those same philosophers, then also dead, shall ridicule this my delusion."

Pretty good for an old Roman Pagan! I think he must have had some "inner light," or been permitted a glimpse or two "behind the scenes." I would rather hold with Cicero and Shakespeare and Washington and Lincoln, than with all our modern agnostics, and hope ever to do so. Rather shall we not devoutly and reverently say, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

And so, let me conclude, in the fine words of the ancient inscription over the old altar at Canterbury Cathedral, England:

"Whosoever thou art that enterest this church,  
Enter it not without the spirit of reverence, and  
Leave it not without one prayer to God for thyself,  
For him who ministers, and for those who worship here."

Trenton, N. J.,  
November 23, 1913.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

November 23, 1913.

Carpenter and Mason Work, .....	\$685 00
Windows, .....	649 75
Metal Work, .....	595 00
Wire Lath, .....	350 00
Lumber, .....	271 75
Mason Material, .....	214 92
Repairing Roof, .....	129 50
Electrical Work, .....	100 00
Painting, .....	80 00
Hardware, .....	27 98
Linoleum, .....	10 00
Cleaning Carpet, .....	5 40
Sundries, including Tile, Tablet, Printing, Postage, etc., .....	114 73
<hr/>	
Total Expense, .....	\$3,234 03
Cash and Subscriptions, .....	3,073 73
<hr/>	
Yet to be Subscribed, .....	*\$160 30

REV. JOHN GOORLEY, *Chairman*,  
 ELNATHAN NAYLOR,  
 H. LEON GALBRAITH,  
 ALEXANDER ERRICKSON,  
 JOHN VAN LUPPEN,  
*Improvement Committee.*

NO OFFERING TAKEN for the Improvements during the Re-Opening  
 Services, but all subscriptions welcome.

---

\* But all since provided for.



## BROAD STREET M. E. CHURCH.

## PASTORS, 1872-1913.

1872—J. R. Westwood.	1891—J. E. Willey.
J. Gaskill, Sup.	1892—Percy Perinchief.
1873—J. R. Westwood.	1893—Percy Perinchief.
J. Gaskill, Sup.	1894—Percy Perinchief.
G. H. Neal, Sup.	1895—J. F. Shaw.
1874—J. R. Westwood.	1896—J. F. Shaw.
J. S. Patterson, Sup.	1897—J. F. Shaw.
1875—G. H. Tullis.	1898—J. F. Heileman.
1876—J. F. Heileman.	1899—J. F. Heileman.
1877—To be Supplied.	1900—J. G. Edwards.
1878—To be Supplied.	1901—J. G. Edwards.
1879—E. Mesler.	1902—J. G. Edwards.
1880—E. Mesler.	1903—J. G. Edwards.
1881—H. J. Conover.	1904—J. R. Thompson.
1882—C. R. Smith.	1905—J. R. Thompson.
1883—C. R. Smith.	1906—J. R. Thompson.
1884—To be Supplied.	1907—G. T. Harris.
1885—To be Supplied.	1908—G. T. Harris.
1886—Supplied by W. Luther.	1909—J. F. Sechrist.
1887—J. E. Willey.	1910—J. F. Sechrist.
1888—J. E. Willey.	1911—J. F. Sechrist.
1889—J. E. Willey.	1912—John Goorley.
1890—J. E. Willey.	1913—John Goorley.